



# Inland Stream

Inland West USA Mission Center News

## New Adventures in Christ

*John G. VanDerWalker II, Mission Center President*

For the past six years I have written a Christmas article for the Inland Stream. I have always tried to tie the celebration of the advent of Christ to the real world ministry that the saints of the Inland West Mission Center are called to bring to our communities.

The news of what congregations are doing in response to the mission initiatives is very encouraging to me. An email from a congregational leader several months ago explained a project they wanted to pursue. The list of things that they hoped to accomplish was very impressive, and all of the things on the list were ministries of blessing. These ideas were simply a way for the church to be Christ in their community. This congregation is not alone in its hope for the future. When I hear such stories I am humbled and thankful to know that God's grace is flowing through you into your communities.

As I begin this new chapter of ministry working throughout the Western Field discovering missional opportunities in various places, I am better prepared for it because of my association with the congregations of the Inland West Mission Center. I have learned a great deal over the past few years through prayer and fellowship with you.

In his translation of the New Testament, Eugene Peterson quotes Mary, the mother of Jesus as saying:

**“ I’m bursting with God-news;  
I’m dancing the song of my Savior God.  
God took one good look at me, and look  
what happened— I’m the most fortunate  
woman on earth!  
What God has done for me will never be  
forgotten, the God whose very name is holy,  
set apart from all others.  
His mercy flows in wave after wave  
on those who are in awe before him.  
He bared his arm and showed his strength,  
scattered the bluffing braggarts.**

**He knocked tyrants off their high horses,  
pulled victims out of the mud.  
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;  
the callous rich were left out in the cold.  
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;  
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled  
them high.  
It’s exactly what he promised, beginning with  
Abraham and right up to now.**

**Luke 1:46-55**

**”**

I feel somewhat this same way— bursting with God-news, the news of God at work in and through you. Through the grace and mercy of God we have been chosen to share the God-news with our neighbors. It is my honor to share this yoke with you and I look forward to taking your stories with me as I move into the future. May God continue to bless the world through your efforts. I wish you a merry Christmas!



*W*



## Experience Congregations in Mission

# Rising to New Challenges

*John Chatburn, Mission Center Financial Officer*

**S**t. Ambrose of Milan is my favorite figure in early church history. St. Ambrose wasn't a hobbit, a super hero, or spy. Nope, he was a politician. A politician who became a saint — who would have thought?



*John Chatburn, pictured here with his wife Andi, will add the title "Inland West Mission Center President" to his current role of Financial Officer January 1.*

So why is St. Ambrose one of my favorites? Two reasons. First, Ambrose's legacy isn't so much in what he did, but rather in the people he developed. Ambrose's greatest gift to the church was mentoring a young man who would become arguably the most influential theologian in the history of Christianity, St. Augustine. Leaders have the responsibility to make others great, to remove barriers and empower persons to be more than they think they can be.

Secondly, in church work I often find myself in roles that I may feel nervous about. The story of St. Ambrose gives me hope that each of us has the capacity to rise up in circumstances that are new and unfamiliar and live out the mission of Christ. None of us are captive to circumstance. Ambrose's mentee, Augustine, gives the church some time-tested advice, "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you."

I am excited to serve as the Mission Center President and Financial Officer for the Inland West Mission Center. I have a strong sense of calling to work in this place and I have a vision of what we can co-create together. I have thoughts, musings, ideas, and convictions that I will be engaging the mission center in conversation about over the coming months. The challenges are real, but so is the mission.

Ambrose was a respected governor of Milan in Italy. When the Bishop of Milan died, rival factions threatened to tear apart the church. Ambrose went to the Bishop's funeral in an attempt to keep the factions within the church in check. At the funeral things got tense and the crowd began to demand to know who the next Bishop of Milan would be. Someone shouted out "Ambrose Bishop!"

Ambrose had a problem. He wasn't a priest. In fact, he wasn't even a baptized Christian! The early church, not always known for its flexibility, took Ambrose through catechism, confirmation, and ordination all within the space of week. St. Ambrose gave away all of his land and wealth and became an advocate for the poor.

**I have a strong sense of calling  
to work in this place and  
I have a vision of  
what we can  
co-create together.**





## Develop Disciples to Serve

# A New Discernment Disposition

*David Brock, Presiding Evangelist*

First of all, it is not like we do not practice discernment! We make decisions every day which require reflection. Do I buy vegetables locally and pay a little more, or save money buying ones shipped from afar? Do I walk to work and save fuel, or do I drive to have more face time at home with family? Do I vote for the local political candidate I believe in, but who does not represent the party I support at the national level? We discern on important issues daily!

The questions, then, are about whether our practice is helpful to us and others; whether we are consciously discerning or letting our neighbor or the social media, or the feelings of the moment, decide for us; whether decisions are made in the context of our identity as children of God and part of the body of Christ.

I invite you to stop (yes, *right now*, if at all possible!) and remember a difficult decision you made that was a wise one.

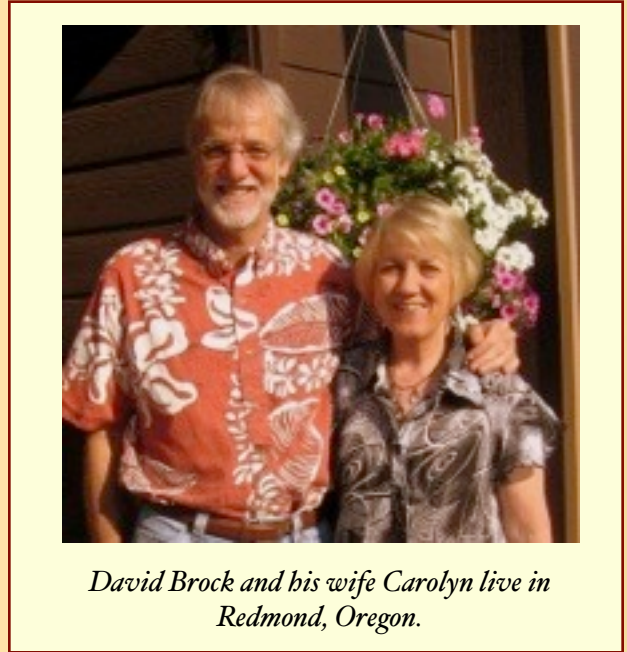
What process did you follow? With whom did you consult? Did you do research? Did you list pros and cons? Did you consider impact on family, community, the planet? Was prayer or meditation involved? Did you invite God into the process? How much time did it take? What helped you move from question to answer?

Now (yes, *now*, please!) recall a decision you consider a poor one. Examine how you arrived at that decision. *NOT* to beat yourself up . . . at all! Let it become a gift by asking, "What lessons are to be learned as I 'discern' about that time of discernment?"

When the decision matters, disciple of Jesus, how do you and I get to "not my will, God, but yours"? Then, how do we know that what we understand to be the Divine is truly a Voice beyond our own? That's really what discernment is. It's a way of living. It's about paying attention and listening deeply to our inner and outer worlds, ever attentive to God in, through, and around us.

Part of discernment is making sure we are asking the right question. It is likely not "God, which color of carpet do you want for the sanctuary?" It is "how do we make this decision so we'll be a more faithful part of the Body of Christ?"

Often the decision *does* matter: to ordain women, for example. Most of us agree that the question about ordaining or marrying homosexuals matters. We practice in our imperfect way to arrive at a God-permeated decision, knowing that how we discern also matters significantly! The principles are at the foundation of our faith movement: "behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you. . ." (Doctrine and Covenants 9:3). That is not the whole answer, but a great place to begin.



*David Brock and his wife Carolyn live in Redmond, Oregon.*





## Invite People To Christ

# Building Relationships in a New World

*Katie Thuesen, Billings Community of Christ*

One year ago, like many young adults before me, I began to feel an itch—an urge to leave my mark on the world by doing something great. That’s when I started thinking about the lure of World Service Corps (WSC). I decided to apply for a short-term internship.



***Katie, pictured here with her Vacation Bible School student Julia, is a Graceland University graduate and was recently ordained to Priest.***

***She invites you to follow her work in Korea through her Facebook page writings and photos.***

I left in June to serve the Community of Christ congregation in Seoul, South Korea. Over the next eight weeks, I developed strong bonds with my WSC partners, Pastor Adam Wade and his family, and the members of the congregation.

We worked hard together to create church services, teach English classes, organize outreach events, and maintain clubs. During my last week, our work culminated with a pirate-themed Vacation Bible School. We built a giant ship out of cardboard boxes in the sanctuary and taught Bible lessons such as Jonah and Jesus walking on the water.

Not long after settling in, I felt a connection to the site that I couldn’t explain, and that inspired me to ask if I could return to Korea for a year-long term. After spending the month of August at home in Montana, I returned to Korea.

In addition to assisting with services, classes, clubs and outreach, I am also developing an all-ages Sunday school based on the Enduring Principles, Mission Initiatives, and Basic Beliefs. It is written in simple English and will be used as a tool for the expanding Japanese congregation. I am also in charge of collecting hymns to be used for an “electronic” hymnal that will be projected each Sunday.

Last but not least, I am immersing myself in the Korean culture. As a WSC intern, one of my

biggest jobs is to learn—keep an open mind, try new things, and figure out how the world works! I am studying the Korean language, Hangul, and making slow but promising progress. I am visiting the traditional tourist sites like the Namsan Tower and DMZ, but also am so interested in the Buddhist temples that are hidden in the mountains, functioning in their own space and time. Every day, as I learn more about the culture, I appreciate the differences and the similarities to my own.

Somewhere along the way, the itch to do something “great” disappeared into the feeling of belonging to something bigger. Something huge. A whole world, in fact. A world where there are many ways to live Christ’s mission.



# Making Mission Real



The "Spokane Valley Apron Ladies" with a photo of a recipient of one of their creations - a Health Ed Connect health worker in Africa. For the last few years the ladies have been creating aprons for the organization's volunteer health workers and school cooks in The Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. Pictured from left to right: Rita Goehner, Doddie Williams, Dottie Gutgsell, JoAnne Dobson, and Laura Carnie. To learn more, go to [healthedconnect.org](http://healthedconnect.org). (photo by John Dean, Spokane Valley)

## Get your monthly news fix!

Are you receiving the mission center monthly e-mail NewsBrief? You can easily subscribe to the NewsBrief by going to [www.cofchrist-iwest.org](http://www.cofchrist-iwest.org) and clicking on the link on the home page.



Find us on Facebook

Community of Christ  
I-West Mission Center

### Mission Center Staff

11515 E. Broadway  
Spokane Valley, WA 99206  
1-800-918-8335

**John VanDerWalker, President**  
1-800-918-8335 [jvanderwalker@cofchrist.org](mailto:jvanderwalker@cofchrist.org)

**Debbie Selzer, Executive Assistant**  
1-800-918-8335 [dselzer@cofchrist-iwest.org](mailto:dselzer@cofchrist-iwest.org)

**John Chatburn, Financial Officer**  
1-800-918-8335 [jchatburn@cofchrist.org](mailto:jchatburn@cofchrist.org)

**JoAnn Fisher, Mission Coordinator**  
1-800-918-8335 [joannfish@mindspring.com](mailto:joannfish@mindspring.com)

**Bob Cadman, Volunteer Support Minister**  
801-648-5740 [rbtcdmn@hotmail.com](mailto:rbtcdmn@hotmail.com)

**Nancy Sacry, Volunteer Support Minister**  
406-287-3411 [mtsacry@gmail.com](mailto:mtsacry@gmail.com)

# Mission Center Conference Snapshots

Oct. 6 & 7, 2012

Spokane Valley Community of Christ



**Left** - Linda Martel (Billings) serves Communion to Dale Fisbwild (Boise)

**Middle left** - David and Mardell Schlotman chat with Rex Bootsma (Richland)

**Middle Right** - President of Seventy Robin Linkhart, Erma Akey (Boise) and Shirley Jester (Boise)

**Top Left** - Dale and Judy Gardner (Helena)

**Top Right** - Mission Coordinator JoAnn Fisher

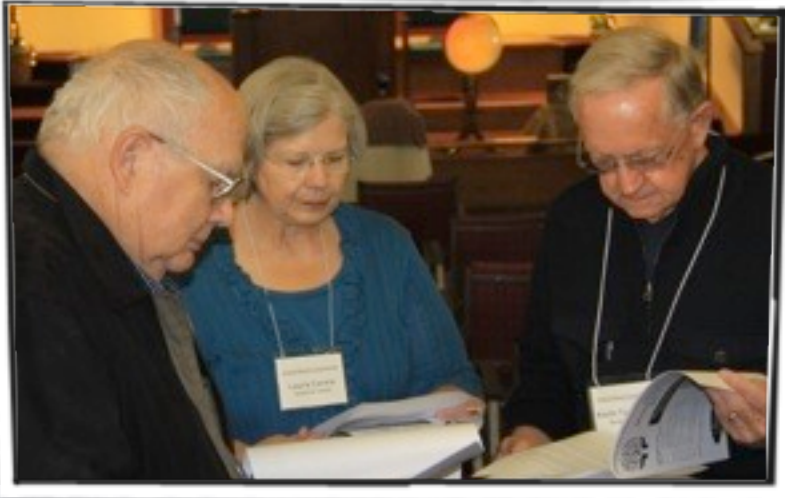


**Many thanks to Dick McKee (Boise) for capturing Conference with his camera.**

**Left - Mission Center President John VanDerWalker, with Rex Bootsma (Richland) and Gil Martel (Billings).**

**Middle Left- Breakout session with Duncan and Laura Carnie, and Keith Townsend (Spokane Valley)**

**Middle Right - President of Seventy Robin Linkart recognizes Cindy Lee (Ogden) on her completion of Discipleship Now.**



**Below: Coffee and conversation with Janice Townsend (Spokane Valley), Glenda Chapman (Richland), Daisy Chapman (Spokane Valley) and Betty Bootmsa (Richland).**



**Above - Billings' Dottie Beck ready to held feed the conference.**

Inland West USA Mission Center  
Community of Christ  
11515 E. Broadway  
Spokane Valley, WA 99206

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
SPOKANE WA  
PERMIT NO. 383

*We wish you a joyous Christmas!*



## Plan now for Summer 2013 Reunions!

Red Cliffe.....June 29 - July 5  
Cascade.....July 9 - 14  
Echo Valley .....July 5 - 12  
Samish.....June 22 - 29

For more details and to view all events on  
the Mission Center calendar,  
visit our site at [www.cofchrist-iwest.org](http://www.cofchrist-iwest.org).